

**\*Draft. Subject to change.**

**CULS5222**

## **Culture and Politics of Anthropocene**

**Instructor: Ka-ming Wu**

**Time: Monday 18:45 to 21:30**

**Venue: CKB UG03**

**Teaching Assistant: Zowie Li Zhuoyue**

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### **Course Description:**

The idea of the Anthropocene – the geological Age of Man – has become widely adopted as a way of describing the entanglement of human activities and the natural world after its popularization by Paul Crutzen in 2000. In the age of the Anthropocene, challenges arising from global environmental change are numerous: extreme weather, land and water pollution, species extinction, toxic contamination, just to name a few. These challenges are now raising concerns both from scholars both in the natural science and from the humanities and the social sciences. This course works on a growing field of Environmental Humanities. We examine works of scholars from a wide variety of disciplines including history, literature, philosophy, cultural studies, religion studies, arts.

### **Course Questions:**

- What are the current methodological and theoretical approaches of understanding the climate crisis in the humanities?
- How can environmental history, science studies, poststructuralist cultural studies, and eco-feminism help us in the humanities help to contribute to the current climate debates and solutions?
- What can we as transdisciplinary intercultural studies students contribute by using art, humanities and new media tools to innovatively tackle current environmental and social challenges?

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Acquire knowledge on major environmental events and struggles in the developed world and the Global South
- Comprehend the historical relationships between ecological crisis, colonialism, state developmentalism and corporate politics
- Evaluate the scientific debates of the Anthropocene using concepts such as slow violence and right activist
- Analyze the ways in which art and humanities can serve as interventions and potential solutions to ecological challenges
- Acquire the awareness and contextual understandings of the United States Sustainable Development Goals

## **Text book: Rob Nixon**

### **Week 1 Introduction (Sep 3)**

- Haraway, Donna. 2016. Introduction. *Staying with Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthutucene*. Duke University Press.
- Check out course padlet

### **Week 2 What is Anthropocene? (Sep 10)**

- Ellis, Erle C. 2018. *Anthropocene: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. A Great Acceleration.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh, and Bruno. Latour. 2021. Introduction: Intimations of the Planetary. *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*. Chicago ; The University of Chicago Press.
- Robert S. Emmett and David E. Nye. 2017. Introduction. The Emergence of the Environmental Humanities. *The Environmental Humanities: A Critical Introduction*.
- The Paris Agreement and the UNSDG
- Glasgow Climate Submit

### **Week 3 The Concept of Slow Violence (Sep 17)**

- Nixon, Rob. 2011. Introduction. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press. 1-45.
- Team making and research preparation (3-4 people in one team)

### **Week 4 Fossil Modernity and Environmental Injustice (Sep 24)**

- Nixon, Rob. 2011. Pipe Dreams, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Environmental Justice and Micro-minority Rights. 103-127
- Team meeting no. 1

### **Week 5 National Day (No class)**

### **Week 6 Tree Movements, Poverty and Democracy (Oct 8)**

- Nixon, Rob. 2011. Slow Violence, Gender, and the Environmentalism of the Poor. 128-149
- Team meeting no. 2

### **Week 7 Dams and Developmental Refugees (Oct 15)**

- Nixon. 2011. Unimagined Communities: Megadams, Monumental Modernity and Developmental Refugees. 150-175.
- 袁凌. 2022. “迁徙与回流.”汉水的身世. 45-130
- Team proposal presentation 1 (5-10 minutes)

**Week 8 Nuclear: Chernobyl and Anti-Nuclear Movement (Oct 22)**

- Nixon. 2011. Slow Violence, Neoliberalism and the Environmental Picaresque. p45-68.
- Team proposal presentation 1 (5-10 minutes)

**Week 9 Plastic and Us (Oct 29)**

- Liboiron, Max. "Redefining pollution and action: The matter of plastics." *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 21, no. 1, 2016, pp. 87-110.
- Stacy Alaimo. 2007. Plastic Chapter. *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in posthuman times*.
- Quiz

**Week 10 The Sixth Extinction (Nov 5)**

- Kolbert, Elizabeth. 2014. *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*. Henry Holt and Co.
- Team preliminary report (5-10 minutes)

**Week 11 Fieldtrip (Nov 12)**

**Week 12 Student Presentation in Class (Nov 19)**

**Week 13 Student Presentation in Class (Nov 26)**

<b>Assessment Component:</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Week 9 Mid-term Quiz	20%	
Week 10 Team preliminary report	15%	
<b>Final project and presentation:</b> Your weekly tutorial meeting will be an exploration and team work of your final project. Start to explore online videos/television/documentary around the world on environmental events /innovative sustainability/waste reduction/marine preservation in different countries.  Think about how you can produce a short video that covers environmental events in the area/city/region/province where you are from. Think about ways of environmental storytelling and communication.  The final two weeks of the course will be a showcase of your team work discussions and presentations.	35%	
<b>An individual short reflection article</b>	30%	Dec 8

Write a small reflection next to the video in relation to what you read about Rob Nixon. Word limits: 1500-2000 words.		
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### **Academic honesty and plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

### **Use of AI tools is allowed with explicit acknowledgement and proper citation**

Students are required to acknowledge all functional uses of a generative AI tool and cite it when they paraphrase, quote, or incorporate into their own work any content (whether it is text, image, data, or other format) that was created by it.

- i. An example of acknowledgement

*'I acknowledge the use of (name of AI tool – e.g. ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>) to (specify the support, e.g. plan my essay, generate some ideas for the content, ask for examples of data collection instruments, get the dates of historical events, etc.).*

- ii. An example of citation

OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT* (Mar 20 version). <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

(Students are reminded that due to the rapid developments of generative AI tools, some citation formats may be updated regularly.)

- iii. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool in their work

"The following text was generated by an AI tool / language model (ChatGPT):"  
[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT here.]

- iv. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool and the prompts that were used to elicit the text from the AI tool

"[The prompt], as generated by an AI language model (ChatGPT):"  
[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT in response to the prompt.]

Students are reminded to learn and use the AI tools responsibly and ethically and be aware of the limitations.

Students are reminded to clarify with the course teacher and obtain permission if necessary when in doubt.